

Europäisches Patentamt

European Patent Office

Office européen des brevets



(11) **EP 0 759 569 A1**

(12)

EUROPEAN PATENT APPLICATION

published in accordance with Art. 158(3) EPC

(43) Date of publication:

26.02.1997 Bulletin 1997/09

(51) Int. Cl.⁶: **G02B 6/42**, **G02B 6/255**,
G02B 6/32

(21) Application number: 96903208.5

(86) International application number:
PCT/JP96/00398

(22) Date of filing: 22.02.1996

(87) International publication number:
WO 96/26459 (29.08.1996 Gazette 1996/39)

(84) Designated Contracting States:
FR GB

(30) Priority: 23.02.1995 JP 35282/95
03.03.1995 JP 44456/95

(71) Applicant: **THE FURUKAWA ELECTRIC CO., LTD.**
Tokyo 100 (JP)

(72) Inventors:

• **SHIRAIISHI, Kazuo**
Kitakatsushika-gun, Taitama 340-02 (JP)

• **MATSUMURA, Kazuhito**
1-8, Wakakusa Dai-2-Jutaku
Utsunomiya-shi, Tochigi 320 (JP)
• **OHISHI, Isamu**
The Furukawa Electric Co., Ltd.
Tokyo 100 (JP)

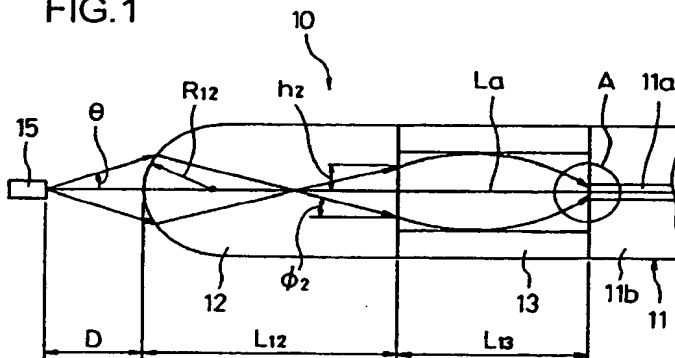
(74) Representative: **Suckling, Andrew Michael**
Marks & Clerk,
57-60 Lincoln's Inn Fields
London WC2A 3LS (GB)

(54) FIBER EQUIPPED WITH LENS

(57) The object is to provide a lensed-fiber which ensures the improvement of the efficiency of coupling with an optical semiconductor device. In the lensed-fiber (10), one end of a single-mode fiber (11), which includes a core (11a) and a cladding (11b), and the

other end of a coreless fiber (12), which has a coreless isotropic refractive index and one end thereof worked into a convex surface, are connected by a square-law index fiber (13) having a square-law index profile.

FIG.1



EP 0 759 569 A1

Description

The present invention relates to a lensed-fiber.

Coupling an optical semiconductor device, such as a laser diode, and an optical fiber with a high coupling efficiency is one of the most important techniques in the field of light communication. Conventionally known are methods in which the optical semiconductor device and the optical fiber are coupled by means of a lens, such as a spherical or nonspherical lens, located between them, and in which a laser diode 5 is coupled with a hemispherically-ended fiber 1 having a spherical tip end along with a core 1a, as shown in FIG. 7.

In the method in which the laser diode 5 is coupled with the hemispherically-ended fiber 1, out of these methods, no lens is used, so that a small-scale coupling can be enjoyed, and besides, a laser diode array and a hemispherically-ended fiber array can be coupled with each other.

According to this coupling method, however, the distance between the tip end of the hemispherically-ended fiber 1 and an emission end face 5a of the laser diode 5 in the optical axis direction, that is, working distance, must be adjusted to 10 μm or thereabout, in order to effect a high coupling efficiency. In assembling the hemispherically-ended fiber 1 and the laser diode 5 into a coupling system, therefore, they sometimes come into contact or collision with each other to be damaged and disabled.

Accordingly, a lensed-fiber 2 shown in FIG. 8 has been proposed as coupling means which can solve the above problem. This fiber 2 is coreless and has an isotropic refractive index, and includes a coreless fiber 4 having a spherical tip end, which is connected to the tip end of an optical fiber 3. A working distance D is lengthened so that contact or collision with the laser diode 5 can be avoided.

In the lensed-fiber 2 with the aforesaid construction, however, the tip end of the coreless fiber 4 is spherical in shape, so that there is a problem that the efficiency of coupling with the laser diode 5 is lowered due to spherical aberration. More specifically, light beams emitted from the laser diode 5 are projected at various angles on the spherical surface of the tip end of the coreless fiber 4, theoretically converged by the lens effect of the spherical surface, and projected on a junction surface F_c between the optical fiber 3 and the coreless fiber 4.

There is a problem, however, that some light beams may be incident upon a cladding outside a core 3a on the junction surface F_c between the optical fiber 3 and the coreless fiber 4, or fail to propagate through the core 3a because the angle of incidence is greater than the critical angle even though the core 3a is reached, so that the efficiency of coupling between the lensed-fiber 2 and the laser diode 5 is lowered.

The object of the present invention is to provide a lensed-fiber which ensures the improvement of the efficiency of coupling with an optical semiconductor device.

In order to achieve the above object, the inventors hereof first modeled an analysis of structural parameters of the lensed-fiber 2, which define coupling characteristics for a high coupling efficiency, by a method based on geometrical optics.

For the lensed-fiber 2, as shown in FIG. 8, the relation between the incidence angle ϕ_1 (degrees) of the light beams on the junction surface F_c between the optical fiber 3 and the coreless fiber 4 and the incidence position h_1 (μm) measured from an optical axis L_a was analyzed in a manner such that the emission angle θ (degrees) of the light beams from the laser diode 5, as a parameter, was varied by degrees. In this analysis, the lensed-fiber 2 was arranged so that the refractive index of the coreless fiber 4 was 1.45, working distance D was 130, 150, and 170 (μm), length L of the coreless fiber 4 was 1 (mm), and curvature radius R was 75 (μm). FIG. 9 shows the results of this analysis.

In FIG. 9, a black spot represents an analytic value for the incidence angle ϕ_1 and the incidence position h_1 based on the light beams on the optical axis L_a at the emission angle $\theta = 0^\circ$. As the absolute value $|\theta|$ of the emission angle θ increases from this point, the analytic value for the incidence angle ϕ_1 and the incidence position h_1 changes in a curve having the shape of a tilted inverted N in the horizontal direction.

In consideration of the core diameter ($= 8 \mu\text{m}$) of a conventional single-mode fiber, on the other hand, light beams incident upon the core 3a of the optical fiber 3 must be adjusted so that the incidence angle ϕ_1 and the incidence position h_1 are within ranges, $|\phi_1| \leq 4.8^\circ$ and $|h_1| \leq 4.0 \mu\text{m}$, indicated by an oblong in the drawing.

Thus, although the range of the incidence angle ϕ_1 of the lensed-fiber 2 has allowance, the allowable range for the incidence position h_1 is narrow on account of the small radius of the core 3a of the optical fiber 3. This feature was found to be the reason why many of the light beams emitted from the laser diode 5 failed to be incident upon the core 3a, resulting in an increase in coupling loss between the lensed-fiber 2 and the laser diode 5.

It can be supposed, therefore, that the efficiency of coupling between the lensed-fiber 1 (sic) and the laser diode 5 can be improved by reversing the relation between the incidence angle ϕ_1 and the incidence position h_1 for the light beams emitted from the laser diode 5.

In general, a lens has a function to change the incidence angle and incidence position of light beams. It is reasonable, therefore, to interpose a lens between the optical fiber 3 and the coreless fiber 4. However, the lens is greater in size than the optical fiber 3 and the coreless fiber 4, it is troublesome to couple it with the optical fiber 3 and the coreless fiber 4 so that their respective optical axes are in alignment.

Accordingly, the inventors hereof hit upon use of an optical fiber which has a square-law index profile and came up

with the present invention, supposing that the relation between the incidence angle and incidence position can be reversed without using a lens.

In order to achieve the above object, according to the present invention, a lensed-fiber is constructed so that one end of a single-mode fiber, which includes a core and a cladding, and the other end of a coreless fiber, which has a square-law index fiber having a square-law index profile.

Preferably, the square-law index fiber has a length equal to the quarter pitch of a light beam sinusoidally propagating in the fiber or a length equal to an odd multiple thereof.

Preferably, moreover, the convex surface of the coreless fiber is a spherical surface.

Further preferably, the single-mode fiber is a TEC (thermal expanded-core) fiber with the core diameter extended at the one end.

The square-law index fiber having the square-law index profile displays a parabolic refractive index distribution based on a quadratic function with respect to the radial direction of the core. If the length of the square-law index fiber is then equal to the quarter pitch of the sinusoidally propagating light or the length equal to the odd multiple thereof, the relation between incidence angle and incidence position is reversed.

If the convex surface at the one end of the coreless fiber is a spherical surface, it can be worked by using a micro-torch or arc discharge, so that the work is easy.

If the single-mode fiber is the TEC fiber with its core diameter extended at one end, moreover, the range of incidence of the light beams projected through the square-law index fiber is wider than that of a fiber whose core diameter is not extended, even in case the refractive index of the coreless fiber is subject to fluctuation.

FIG. 1 is a side view showing a lensed-fiber according to the present invention;

FIG. 2 is an enlarged view of a section A of the lensed-fiber of FIG. 1;

FIG. 3 shows working distance characteristic curves representing the results of analysis of working distance dependence related to the incidence angle ϕ_1 and incidence position h_1 for light beams incident upon a single-mode fiber of the lensed-fiber of FIG. 1;

FIGS. 4A to 4F are diagrams for illustrating manufacturing processes for the lensed-fiber of FIG. 1;

FIG. 5 shows a variation characteristic curve representing the change of coupling loss compared with the change of working distance actually measured on the manufactured lensed-fiber;

FIG. 6 is a side view showing a modification of the lensed-fiber of the present invention;

FIG. 7 is a side view of a conventional hemispherically-ended fiber used for coupling with an optical semiconductor device;

FIG. 8 is a side view of a conventional lensed-fiber used for coupling with an optical semiconductor device; and

FIG. 9 shows condensing characteristic curves representing effective condensing ranges related to the incidence angle ϕ_1 and incidence position h_1 for light beams incident upon a single-mode fiber of the lensed-fiber of FIG. 8.

Referring now to FIGS. 1 to 6, one embodiment of the present invention will be described.

As shown in FIG. 1, a lensed-fiber 10 includes a single-mode fiber (hereinafter referred to as "SMF") 11 and a coreless fiber 12, which are connected by means of a square-law index fiber 13, and is opposed to an optical semiconductor device, e.g., laser diode 15, at a working distance D therefrom when it is used.

The SMF 11 is an optical fiber which includes a core 11a and a cladding 11b, one end of the SMF 11 being connected to the other end of the coreless fiber 12 by means of the square-law index fiber 13.

The coreless fiber 12 is a fiber with a length L_{12} which has a coreless isotropic refractive index and one end thereof worked into a spherical surface with a curvature radius R_{12} .

The square-law index fiber 13 is a graded-index optical fiber which has a length L_{13} equal to the quarter pitch of the sinusoidally propagating light or a length equal to an odd multiple of the length L_{13} and a square-law index profile.

The following is a description of the principle on which the relation between incidence angle and incidence position is reversed in the case where the length of the square-law index fiber 13, in the lensed-fiber 10 according to the present invention, is adjusted to the length equal to the quarter pitch of the sinusoidally propagating light or the length equal to the odd multiple thereof.

In general, the distribution of the refractive index n of the square-law index fiber 13 is given by

$$n = n_0[1 - r^2/(2A_g^2)], \quad (1)$$

where A_g is the convergence parameter of light beams in the square-law index fiber 13, r is the distance from the central axis of the square-law index fiber 13, and n_0 is the refractive index on the central axis.

Supposing near-axis light beams and using a light matrix, the incidence position h_1 and the incidence angle ϕ_1 (see FIG. 2) on a junction surface between the SMF 11 and the square-law index fiber 13, obtained when light beams emitted from the laser diode 15 are propagated through the square-law index fiber 13 of the length L_{13} to be incident upon

the SMF 11, can be expressed as follows:

$$\begin{pmatrix} h_1 \\ \phi_1 \end{pmatrix} = \begin{pmatrix} \cos \gamma & A_g \cdot \sin \gamma \\ -1/A_g \cdot \sin \gamma & \cos \gamma \end{pmatrix} \begin{pmatrix} h_2 \\ \phi_2 \end{pmatrix} \quad (2)$$

where h_2 (μm) is the incidence position of the light beams measured from an optical axis L_a on a junction surface between the coreless fiber 12 and the square-law index fiber 13, ϕ_2 (degrees) is the incidence angle, and γ is equivalent to a phase value indicative of the meandering of the light beams and is given by $\gamma = L_{13}/A_g$.

Since the pitch of the light beams sinusoidally propagating in the square-law index fiber 13 is $2\pi A_g$, on the other hand, a 1/4 period is $(\pi A_g)/2$, and the length L_{od} equal to the odd multiple of the length L_{13} , which is equal to the quarter pitch of the propagating light beams, is given by

$$L_{od} = \pi A_g (N + 1/2), \quad (3)$$

where N is a natural number given by $N = 0, 1, 2, \dots$.

Accordingly, equation (2) may be transformed as follows:

$$\begin{pmatrix} h_1 \\ \phi_1 \end{pmatrix} = \begin{pmatrix} 0 & (-1)^N A_g \\ (-1)^{N+1}/A_g & 0 \end{pmatrix} \begin{pmatrix} h_2 \\ \phi_2 \end{pmatrix} = \begin{pmatrix} (-1)^N A_g \phi_2 \\ (-1)^{N+1} h_2/A_g \end{pmatrix} \quad (4)$$

Thus, it can be seen that when the square-law index fiber 13, which has the length L_{od} equal to the odd multiple of the length L_{13} which is equal to the quarter pitch of the propagating light beams, is connected between the SMF 11 and the coreless fiber 12, the relation between the incidence angle and incidence position of the light beams is reversed with the convergence parameter A_g used as a parameter.

If the specific refractive index difference of the square-law index fiber 13 and the radius of the core are Δ and a , respectively, the pitch L_w of the sinusoidally propagating light is given by

$$L_w = 2\pi A_g = 2\pi a / (2\Delta)^{1/2}. \quad (5)$$

The relation between the incidence angle ϕ_1 (degrees) of the light beams on the junction surface between the SMF 11 and the square-law index fiber 13 and the incidence position h_1 (μm) measured from the optical axis L_a in the lensed-fiber 10 according to the present invention arranged in the aforesaid manner, was analyzed by a method based on geometrical optics. FIG. 3 shows the results of this analysis.

In this analysis, the lensed-fiber 10 was arranged so that the refractive index of the coreless fiber 12 was 1.45, working distance D was 130, 150, and 170 (μm), length L_{12} of the coreless fiber 12 was 1 (mm), curvature radius R_{12} was 75 (μm), length L_{13} of the square-law index fiber 13 was equal to the quarter pitch of the sinusoidally propagating light (wavelength: 1.3 μm), and convergence parameter A_g was 250 (μm). The value of the convergence parameter $A_g = 250$ (μm) corresponds, for example, to the case in which the core radius a and specific refractive index difference Δ are 25 (μm) and 0.5%, respectively, in the square-law index fiber 13. In FIG. 3, a black spot represents an analytic value for the incidence angle ϕ_1 and the incidence position h_1 based on the light beams on the optical axis L_a at the emission angle $\theta = 0^\circ$.

As for the incidence position h_1 and the incidence angle ϕ_1 , as seen from FIG. 3, the incidence position h_1 of the light beams had a small value such that it was close to the optical axis L_a , while the incidence angle ϕ_1 was wide, so that the distribution had the shape of a tilted S. In this case, a region represented by an oblong in the drawing indicates ranges for the incidence position h_1 and the incidence angle ϕ_1 in which the light beams emitted from the laser diode 15 can be effectively incident upon the core 11a of the SMF 11. It was indicated that many of light beams emitted from the laser diode 15 at the emission angle θ were incident upon the SMF 11, and the coupling loss of the lensed-fiber 10 was small.

Subsequently, the lensed-fiber 10 was manufactured in the steps of procedure shown in FIGS. 4A to 4F, in consideration of the results of the analysis described above.

First, the square-law index fiber 13 having the square-law index profile was fused to the tip end of the SMF 11 shown in FIG. 4A (FIG. 4B), and the square-law index fiber 13 was cut to the length L_{13} which is equal to the quarter pitch of the sinusoidally propagating light (FIG. 4C).

Then, the coreless fiber 12 having the coreless isotropic refractive index was fused to an end portion of the cut square-law index fiber 13 (FIG. 4D), and the coreless fiber 12 was cut to the length L_{12} of about 1 mm (FIG. 4E).

Subsequently, the cut end of the coreless fiber 12 was heated and fused by arc discharge, and was worked into a

hemispherical surface with the curvature radius $R_{12} = 75(\mu\text{m})$, whereupon the lensed-fiber 10 shown in FIG. 4F was manufactured.

A light beam with a wavelength of $1.3 \mu\text{m}$ from the laser diode 15 was projected on the manufactured lensed-fiber 10, and the working distance D was varied as the coupling loss was measured, whereupon the results shown in FIG. 5 were obtained. The coupling loss was obtained by measuring the quantity of light emitted from the SMF 11 compared with the quantity of light emitted directly from the laser diode 15.

As seen from FIG. 5, the coupling loss had a minimum value (= 5 dB) when the working distance D was about $130 \mu\text{m}$. This coupling loss value was small enough not to arouse any problem in practical use of the lensed-fiber 10, and was a satisfactory value for the elimination of the possibility of interference with the laser diode 15.

The lensed-fiber may be formed of a so-called TEC (thermal expanded-core) fiber in which the core 11a of the SMF 11 is worked so as to spread outward at its end portion on the side of the square-law index fiber 13, as shown in FIG. 6. With use of the fiber worked in this manner, the range of incidence of the light beams projected on the SMF 11 through the square-law index fiber can be extended.

According to the present invention, as is evident from the above description, there may be provided a lensed-fiber which ensures the improvement of the efficiency of coupling between component members. Since all its components are fiber-shaped, the lensed-fiber of the present invention is small-sized and light in weight as a whole. Since all the components are fiber-shaped, moreover, the lensed-fiber of the present invention can be manufactured by utilizing the existing fiber fusion connecting technique, thus providing outstanding effects including ease of manufacture, capability of mass production, low price offered, etc.

If the length of the square-law index fiber is then equal to the quarter pitch of the sinusoidally propagating light or the length equal to the odd multiple thereof, the relation between incidence angle and incidence position is reversed.

If the convex surface at the one end of the coreless fiber is a spherical surface, it can be easily worked by using a micro-torch or arc discharge.

If the single-mode fiber is formed of the TEC fiber with its core diameter extended at one end, moreover, the range of incidence of the light beams projected through the square-law index fiber can be made wider than that of a fiber whose core diameter is not extended.

Claims

1. A lensed-fiber comprising:

- a single-mode fiber including a core and a cladding;
- a coreless fiber having a coreless isotropic refractive index and one end thereof worked into a convex surface;
- and
- a square-law index fiber having a square-law index profile and connecting one end of the single-mode fiber and the other end of the coreless fiber.

2. A lensed-fiber according to claim 1, wherein said square-law index fiber has a length equal to the quarter pitch of the sinusoidally propagating light propagated through said fiber or a length equal to an odd multiple thereof.

3. A lensed-fiber according to claim 1, wherein said convex surface of said coreless fiber is a spherical surface.

4. A lensed-fiber according to claim 1, wherein said single-mode fiber is a TEC (thermal expanded-core) fiber with the core diameter extended at said one end.

FIG. 1

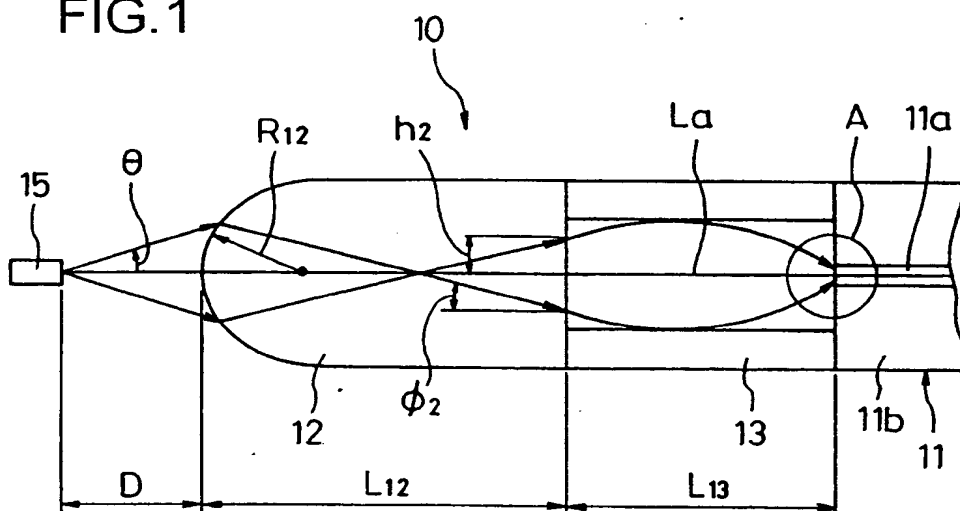


FIG.2

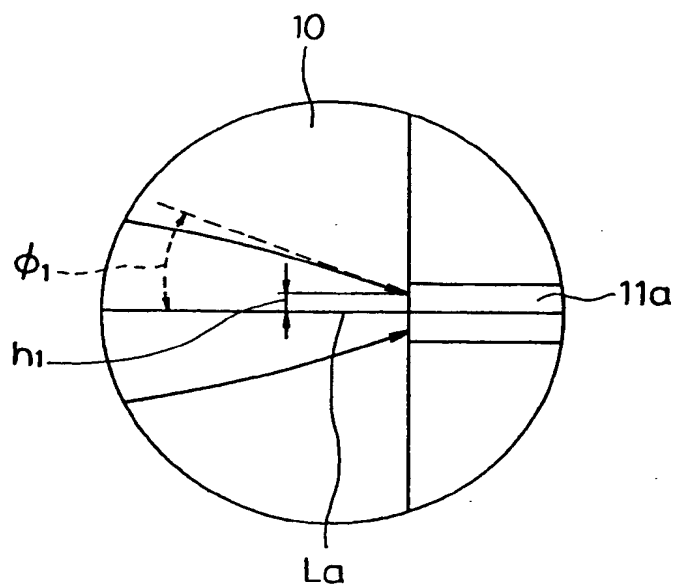


FIG.3

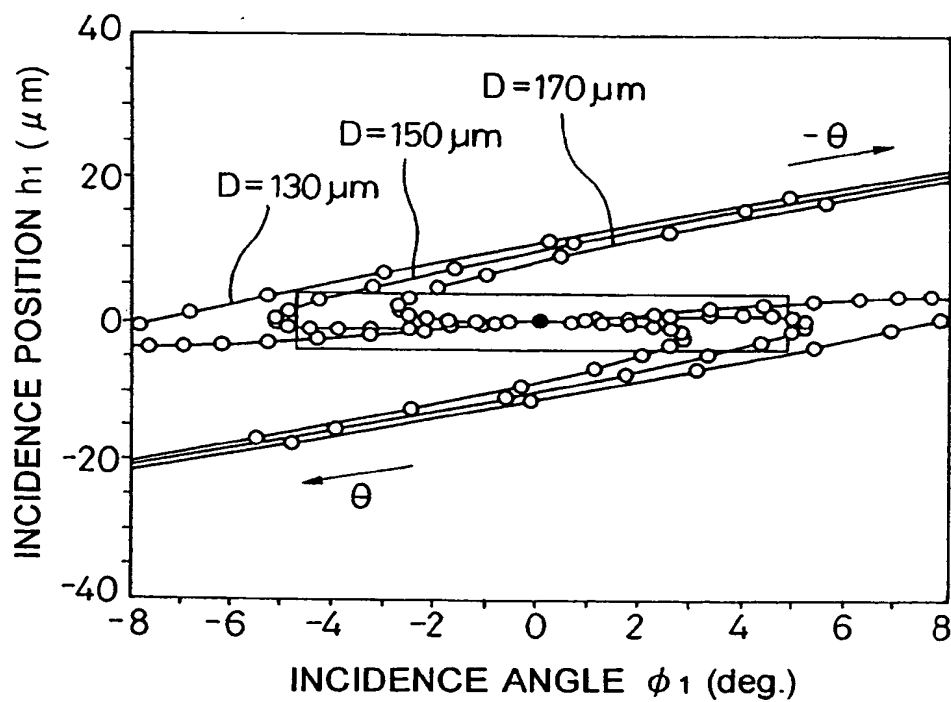


FIG.4A

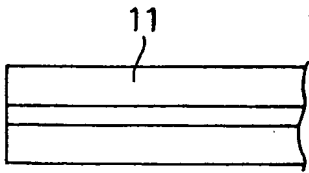


FIG.4B

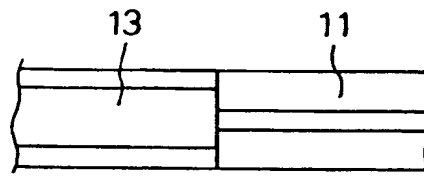


FIG.4C

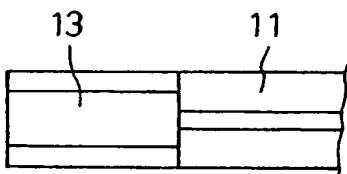


FIG.4D

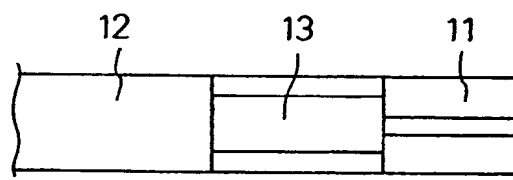


FIG.4E

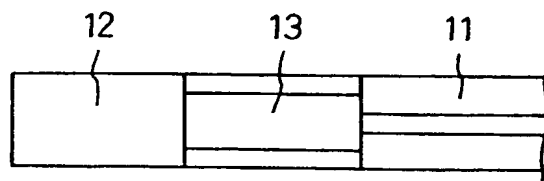


FIG.4F

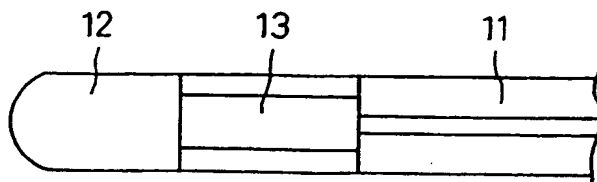


FIG.5

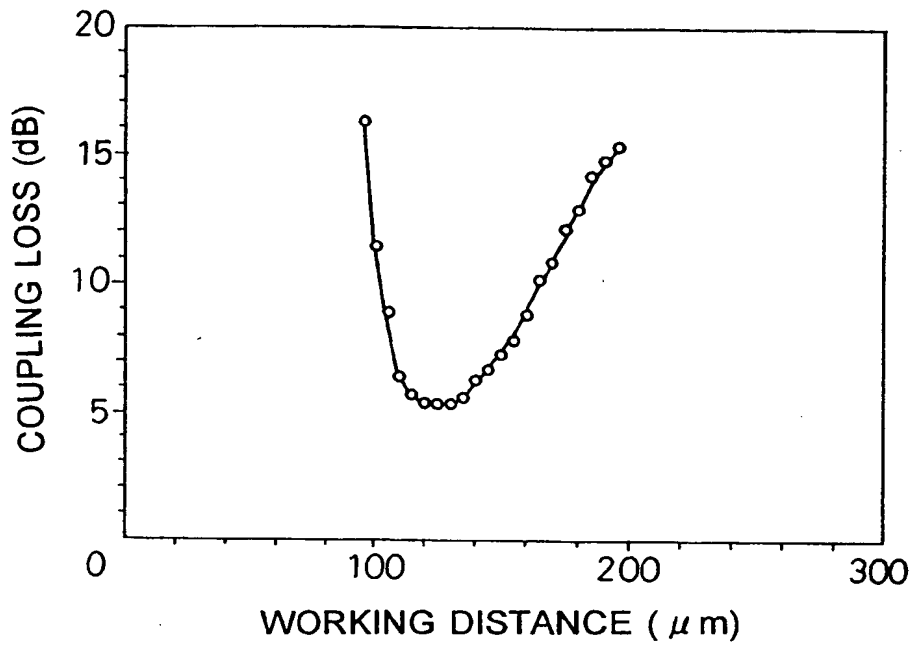


FIG.6

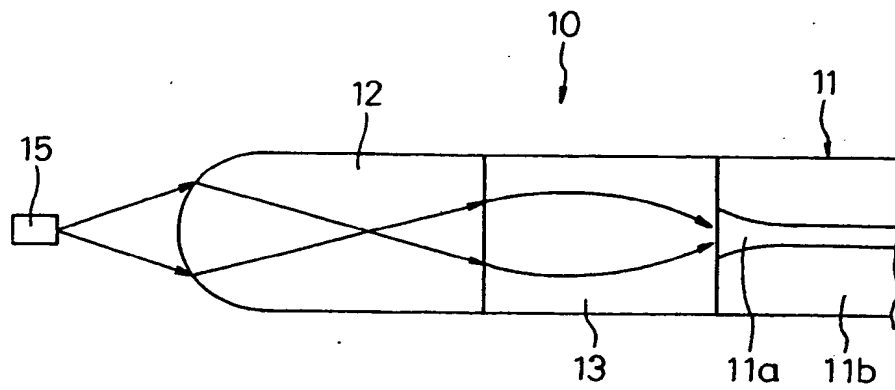


FIG.7

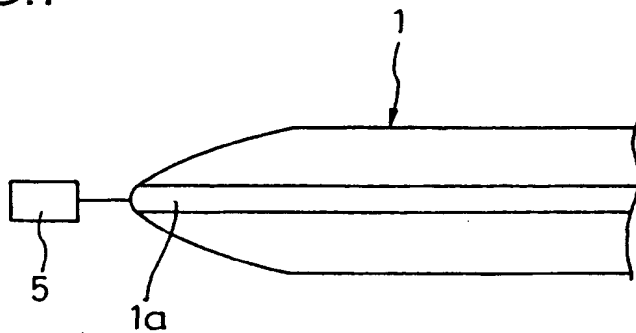


FIG.8

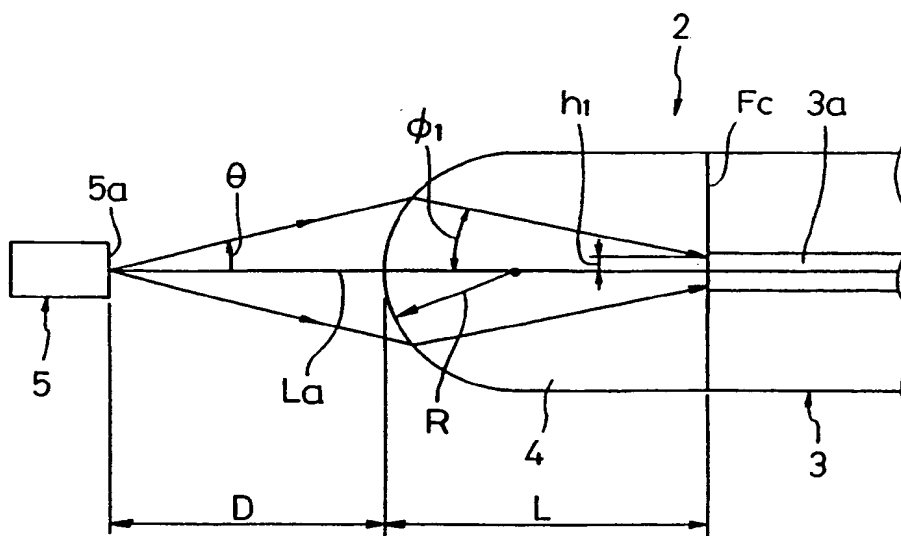
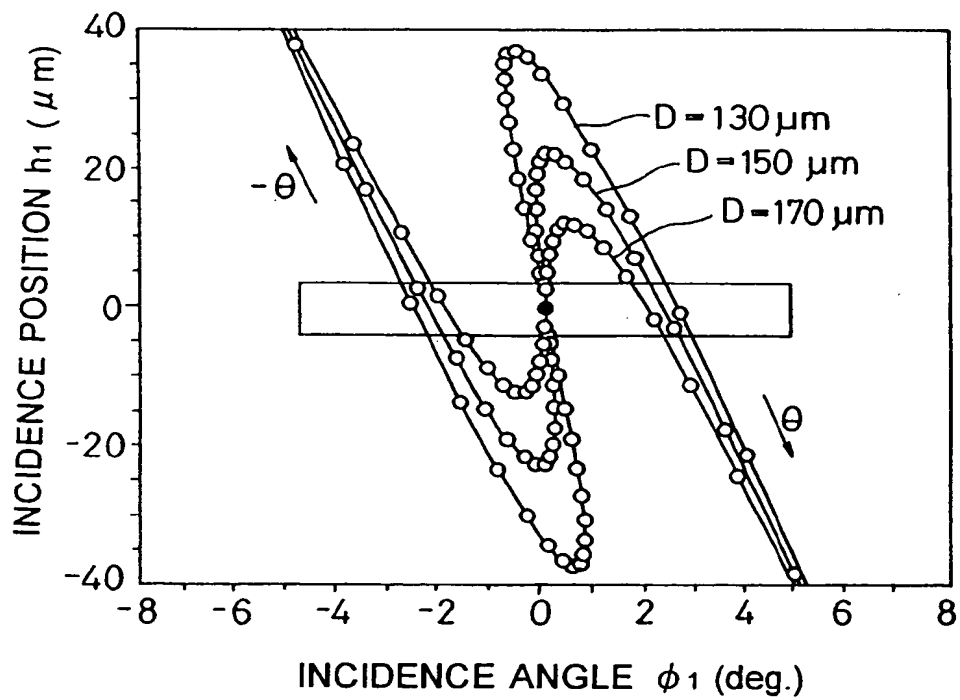


FIG.9



INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International application No.

PCT/JP96/00398

A. CLASSIFICATION OF SUBJECT MATTER		
Int. Cl ⁶ G02B6/42, G02B6/255, G02B6/32		
According to International Patent Classification (IPC) or to both national classification and IPC		
B. FIELDS SEARCHED		
Minimum documentation searched (classification system followed by classification symbols)		
Int. Cl ⁶ G02B6/42, G02B6/255, G02B6/32		
Documentation searched other than minimum documentation to the extent that such documents are included in the fields searched		
Jitsuyo Shinan Koho 1926 - 1996		
Kokai Jitsuyo Shinan Koho 1971 - 1995		
Electronic data base consulted during the international search (name of data base and, where practicable, search terms used)		
C. DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT		
Category*	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.
Y	JP, 4-97109, A (NEC Corp.), March 30, 1992 (30. 03. 92), Claims 1, 2, page 1, lines 1 to 5, upper right column, line 14, lower left column to line 1, lower right column, page 3, Fig. 1 (Family: none)	1 - 4
Y	JP, 58-79210, A (NEC Corp.), May 13, 1983 (13. 05. 83), Lines 11 to 18, lower left column, page 2, lines 2 to 7, left column, page 3, Fig. 1 (Family: none)	1 - 4
Y	JP, 1-92608, U (Fujitsu Ltd.), June 16, 1989 (16. 06. 89), Claim, page 1, Fig. 1 (Family: none)	2
Y	JP, 3-130705, A (Nippon Telegraph & Telephone Corp.), June 4, 1991 (04. 06. 91), Claim 1, page 1, line 14, lower left column to	4
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Further documents are listed in the continuation of Box C. <input type="checkbox"/> See patent family annex.		
* Special categories of cited documents: "A" document defining the general state of the art which is not considered to be of particular relevance "E" earlier document but published on or after the international filing date "L" document which may throw doubts on priority claim(s) or which is cited to establish the publication date of another citation or other special reason (as specified) "O" document referring to an oral disclosure, use, exhibition or other means "P" document published prior to the international filing date but later than the priority date claimed "T" later document published after the international filing date or priority date and not in conflict with the application but cited to understand the principle or theory underlying the invention "X" document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered novel or cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is taken alone "Y" document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is combined with one or more other such documents, such combination being obvious to a person skilled in the art "Z" document member of the same patent family		
Date of the actual completion of the international search May 14, 1996 (14. 05. 96)		Date of mailing of the international search report May 28, 1996 (28. 05. 96)
Name and mailing address of the ISA/ Japanese Patent Office		Authorized officer
Facsimile No.		Telephone No.

Form PCT/ISA/210 (second sheet) (July 1992)

INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International application No.

PCT/JP96/00398

C (Continuation). DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT

Category*	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.
	line 9, lower right column, page 5, Fig. 3 (Family: none)	

Form PCT/ISA/210 (continuation of second sheet) (July 1992)